

Message Text

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44

ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 NRC-05 ACDA-07 EB-07

COME-00 XMB-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 FEAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /104 W

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R 061536Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5151

INFO USERDA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2282

ALSO FOR NRC, ACDA, ONR, USDOC, EXIMBANK

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, PGOV, AR, IAEA

SUBJECT: ARGENTINE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION (CNEA)

REF: BUENOS AIRES 2212

1. SUMMARY. MASSIVE TAKEOVER OF CNEA BY NAVY PERSONNEL EXPCTED TO BE SHORT-LIVED, BUT TENURE OF CASTRO MADERO IN PRESIDENCY LIKELY TO BE MUCH LONGER. CASTRO MADERO TELLS US CNEA PROGRAM WILL BE "TOTALLY" PEACEFUL. EMBALSE PROJECT LIKELY TO MOVE FORWARD, BUT OTHER NUCLEAR PROJECTS WILL DEPEND ON NATIONAL ENERGY PLAN. CASTRO MADERO LIKELY TO REPLACE IRAOLAGOITIA ON IAEA BOARD. END SUMMRY.

2. COURTESY CALL. S&T COUNSELOR/ERDA REP MADE INITIAL/CALL TODAY (APR 5) ON NEW CNEA PRESIDENT CAPT. CARLOS CASTRO MADERO. HE WAS RECEIVED IN MOST CORDIAL MANNER. ALSO ATTENDING MEETING WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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LUIS JOSE COLANGELO, 18-YEAR EMPLOYEE OF CNEA WHO HAS BEEN IN

CHARGE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS.

3. TENURE OF NAVY TAKEOVER. CASTRO MADERO CHARACTERIZED THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE HE HAS INSTITUTED AS A TEMPORARY ONE. WHILE HE WOULD NOT SAY HOW LONG THIS WOULD LAST, HE SUGGESTED THAT ABOUT ONE MONTH WAS ALL HE WAS THINKING OF. THE REVISED, TEMPORARY ORGANIZATION RESEMBLES THAT OF 1968. AN ATTEMPT WILL CLEARLY BE MADE TO INDUCE SOME OF THE CNEA OLD HANDS CURRENTLY WORKING ABROAD TO RETURN. SOME OF THESE WOULD TAKE OVER THE MAJOR DIVISIONS OF CNEA. CASTRO MADERO WAS LESS FIRM IN REGARD TO HIS OWN TENURE IN PRESIDENCY, GIVING IMPRESSION THAT THIS LIKELY TO BE MUCH LONGER LASTING.

4. PEACEFUL INTENTIONS. CASTRO MADERO STATED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT CNEA'S PROGRAM WOULD BE "TOTALLY" PEACEFUL. HE STATED THAT ARGENTINA WOULD CONTINUE TO HONOR ITS SAFEGUARDS COMMITMENTS WITH CANADA, THE U.S., AND OTHERS. (COMMENT: CANADA RECOGNIZED THE NEW ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT ON APRIL 1, AFTER THE PREPARATION OF REFTEL AND EIGHT DAYS AFTER THE COUP.)

5. SENID. CAPTAIN NASTA IS NOW THE HEAD OF THE NAVY R&D ORGANIZATION REPLACING CASTRO MADERO. IF THE LATTER IS REPLACED AS HEAD OF CNEA, HE COULD RETURN TO SENID, BUT THIS POSSIBILITY SEEMS FAIRLY REMOTE. FOR ONR: NONETHELESS, THERE SEEMS NO NEED FOR A CHANGE IN VISIT ARRANGEMENTS PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED (E.G. STATE 62428 AS MODIFIED BY BUENOS AIRES 1918.

6. NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM. CASTRO MADERO FEELS THAT EMBALSE PROJECT WILL MOVE FORWARD. ON FUTURE PLANTS, HE INDICATED THAT THESE WOULD DEPEND ON NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY TO BE DEVELOPED BY ECONOMIC TEAM AND THAT AVAILABILITY OF CREDITS WOULD BE KEY FACTOR. HE ENVISIONED A ROLE FOR NUCLEAR PLANTS TO REPLACE FOSSIL-FUEL GENERATION. HE WOULD NOT RPT NOT COMMIT HIMSELF AS TO WHETHER CNEA WOULD NECESSARILY ADHERE TO THE CANDU LINE, LEAVING IMPRESSION OF SOME OPEN-MINDEDNESS ON SUBJECT.

7. FUEL CYCLE AND HEAVY WATER. AS THE NEED FOR THESE DEPENDS GREATLY ON THE NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM, CASTRO MADERO GAVE IMPRESSION THAT THERE WOULD BE SLOW DOWN UNTIL THAT HAD BEEN DECIDED. HE NOTED THAT HEAVY WATER PLANT MADE SENSE FOR FOUR NUCLEAR POWER
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PLANTS, BUT NOT FOR ONE. SIMILAR RATIONALE APPLIED TO FUEL FABRICATION PLANT. CHEMICAL RE-PROCESSING WAS STATED TO BE A "SECONDARY PRIORITY." (COMMENT: THIS WAS AS OPPOSED TO NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, WHICH ARE 1ST PRIORITY.)

8. IAEA. GIVEN CHANGES HERE, IRAOLAGOITIA COULD NOT RPT NOT CONTINUE TO REPRESENT ARGENTINA ON IAEA BOARD. CASTRO MADERO EXPECTS TO REPLACE HIM IN THAT CAPACITY. HE ASSUMES THAT VICE

PRESIDENT OF BOARD WILL MOVE UP TO TAKE OVER PRESIDENCY. CASTRO MADERO BEGINNING TO THINK OF ATTENDING JUNE BOG MEETING.

9. U.S.-ARGENTINA COOPERATION. CASTRO MADERO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN RENEWED AND STRENGTHENED CONTACTS WITH ERDA AND WITH NRC ON REGULATORY MATTERS. WE SUGGESTED POSSIBILITY OF VISIT TO ARGENTINA BY U.S. ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITIES BEFORE OR AFTER SEPT. IAEA GEN CONF. IN RIO, AND CASTRO MADERO WAS MOST INTERESTED IN THIS IDEA.

10. ORGANIZATION. ACCORDING TO COLANGELO, PRESENT CNEA ORGANIZATION HEADED BY MANAGERS FOR ENERGY, TECHNOLOGY, RAW MATERIALS, RESEARCH, RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION AND SAFETY, LOGISTICS, AND ECONOMY.

11. PURGES. ALSO ACCORDING TO COLANGELO, SOME EIGHTY CNEA PERSONNEL HAD BEEN FIRED AND SOME TWO HUNDRED MORE WERE ABOUT TO BE. THE CLEANOUT, WE WERE TOLD, WAS LARGELY TO RID THE COMMISSION OF LEFTISTS WHO HAD COME ABOARD UNDER THE PERONISTS. (TOTAL EMPLOYMENT AT CNEA COUNTRY-WIDE, IS AROUND 5000.)

12. PRECEDENTS FOR MILITARY HEADS OF AEC'S. IN ADDITION TO CHILEAN CASE (PARA 11, REFTEL). COLOMBIA AT ONE TIME HAD ACTIVE DUTY NAVAL OFFICER (RAMIREZ) AS DIRECTOR OF IAN. THERE WAS ANOTHER PRECEDENT IN BOLIVIA, WHERE PAZ LORA (ARMY OFFICER), HEADED COBOEN FOR MANY YEARS.

13. COMMENT: WE ARE INCLINED TO ACCEPT CASTRO MADERO'S STATEMENTS AT FACE VALUE. ACTIONS OVER COMING MONTHS SHOULD CONFIRM HIS PLEDGE OF PEACEFUL INTENTIONS. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF, BEFORE THE YEAR IS OUT, CASTRO MADERO WERE TO RETIRE FROM THE NAVY BUT REMAIN ON AT THE HELM OF CNEA. HE IS ACTING LIKE A MAN WHO EXPECTS TO KEEP THE JOB FOR SOME TIME.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR ENERGY, MILITARY GOVERNMENT, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BUENOS02282
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760129-0938
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760494/aaaadcnb.tel
Line Count: 155
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BUENOS AIRES 2212
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 MAR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <27 JUL 2004 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ARGENTINE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION (CNEA)
TAGS: TECH, PGOV, AR, IAEA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006